

News and features about ModuMath and the people who use it.

ModuMath Connections

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ABE Instructors Seek Flexible Solutions

Imagine you were asked to prepare one dinner for thirty guests, each with special dietary needs. Some of your guests are diabetic, others are vegetarian, and others need low-cholesterol meals. What kind of meal could you make to meet everyone's needs? That dilemma is similar to the one faced by Adult Basic Education (ABE) instructors.

ABE instructors typically prepare lesson plans for students who have a wide range of goals and skill levels. Their students come from an assortment of programs: family literacy, ESL (English as a Second Language), GED (General Educational Development), and VPI (Vocational Preparatory Instruction) to name a few. Teaching "to the middle" of a diverse group is a challenge at best; impossible at worst. Perhaps that is why so many ABE educators say ModuMath's flexibility has made their job easier.

Marge Tuccio teaches an ABE/GED preparatory class at Valley Regional Adult Education in Shelton, Connecticut. Her students have different levels of math preparedness. Students work at their own pace, which means that at any one time Tuccio has as many objectives to teach as she has students. "The best part about ModuMath, from my perspective," says Tuccio, "is that I can get students to work independently in the classroom on a laptop on their individual problem areas. The individual assignments are the best." Tuccio's students have responded well to the multimedia lessons. "One student told me he liked it because he could see it and hear it."

Narrated lesson segments are just one feature that appeals to ABE instructors. Instructor Carol

D'Amato of the Office of Employment and Training in Bridgeton, New Jersey says, "the comprehensiveness of (ModuMath's) curriculum and its interactive set-up have served our students well." The OET office has used ModuMath for several years as part of their Learning Link program. The program helps adult learners prepare for the GED test and/or upgrade their academic skills. D'Amato says, "Some of our participants need just a quick review of specific math skills, whereas others may need more intense and wide-ranging practice in many areas." She likes the way instructors have the choice of assigning one or more lessons, or letting the diagnostic test automatically generate a list of lessons geared to an individual's needs.



STUDENTS WORK ON MODUMATH AT THE FIRST CHOICE PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM IN RACINE, WISCONSIN

Instructors at Stamford Adult Education in Connecticut also enjoy the flexibility of tailoring assignments to a learner's needs. "ModuMath provides versatility," says GED instructor Joe Brunner. Over time, Brunner has watched his students become self-assured: "ModuMath has given my students more confidence in approaching math. Many identify math with failure. ModuMath's guided approach helps to change that to success."

While versatility and flexibility are important, student success is the benchmark. At Akron Public

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Schools Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) program, Diane Kauffman says they've seen "significant results." ABLE assists adults in GED prep, the Nursing Entrance Test, and the Ohio Proficiency/Graduation Test. One example of ABLE's success with ModuMath is a client who was making his second attempt to pass the math portion of the GED test. "For two weeks he worked with the various videos," says Kauffman. "He increased his GED math score by 60 points! This was the only difference in his preparation as we were curious as to the benefits of this program." This success story and others spurred Akron Public Schools to expand their use of ModuMath to four locations.

Kauffman says her students benefit from having control of ModuMath lessons. When students don't "get it" the first time, she has them review lesson segments or entire lessons on their own. "I believe such repetition would not occur if the learner had to ask the instructor the same question over and over."

For many adult students, improving math skills is a bread-and-butter issue. Students at the First Choice Pre-Apprenticeship Jobs Training Program in Racine, Wisconsin need math to succeed in building and construction trades. According to Director Olatoye Baiyewu, "ModuMath has made a tremendous impact on our students, helping them acquire basic math and algebra skills both in the applied and computational areas. We could not have done it in the amount of time the students are enrolled in our program. (Without ModuMath) we could not have achieved the level of success experienced by the program."

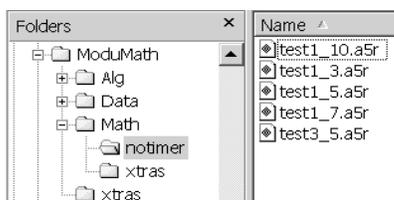
The step-by-step video instruction helps learners gain a greater understanding of the material. Baiyewu explains, "All aspects of the tutorial I believe are well tailored to the skill sets that our students bring with them."

So while ABE students may bring different levels of skill to the classroom, ModuMath is able to accommodate all of them with a flexible menu of instruction.

ModuMath Tips

Turn off the timer: ModuMath Basic Math has five tests with timed questions (1.3, 1.5, 1.7, 1.10, and 3.5). These tests assess the most basic skills in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division – the kinds of problems students should commit to memory such as $5 + 5 = 10$ and $63 \div 9 = 7$.

However, in some settings instructors prefer to eliminate the pressure of timed tests. Tests without timed questions are included with your Basic Math courseware. Look in the ModuMath folder, for the Math subfolder. The untimed tests are in the "notimer" subfolder.



Copy the files in the "notimer" subfolder to the Math folder. You'll replace files with the same name in the Math folder. Do not change the name of any file.

Conference Calendar

You'll find ModuMath at 15-20 state and national conferences each year. Among the conferences we regularly attend are:

- NADE - National Association for Developmental Education
- NCLCA - National College Learning Center Association
- AMATYC - American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges

We're always interested in learning about conferences geared toward remedial mathematics and adult educators. We'd also be happy to assist and support instructors interested in making a presentation about their use of ModuMath at state or national conferences.

For a list of conferences we're attending, see the calendar link on our website: www.modumath.org. It's updated frequently so check back often.

College Preps Students for Technical Training

This newsletter is all about sharing successful strategies and useful information. Here's a great example of an instructor adopting an effective practice and adapting it to meet the particular needs of her students. Andra Dorlac, the Director of the Student Achievement Center at Ranken Technical College in St. Louis, was looking at various integrated learning systems for her lab when she discovered ModuMath at a National College Learning Center Association Conference in 1999.

ModuMath's comprehensive approach to arithmetic and algebra was the first thing that caught her attention. She thought it might work well with students in Ranken's STEPS program. As Andra describes it, "The purpose of the STEPS program is to prepare students to go into the elementary/intermediate algebra course and/or to be ready for the math used in their technical major." Typically, STEPS students are those who score too low on the ASSET Numerical Skills Placement Test to be placed in a regular college math class.

Andra strives to find ways to help students succeed, so ModuMath's flexibility has served her well. She first used the assessment test to have the software automatically assign just the lessons an individual student needed. Later she experimented by assigning students all of the lessons in a course. By requiring students to begin with the easiest lessons, Andra helped learners build confidence and familiarity with the system. When a student reached a test he or she couldn't pass, the need to "buckle down" and study was more readily accepted.

Andra has shared her experiences with other instructors using ModuMath - and she's borrowed some ideas, too. For example, some instructors use ModuMath as part of a hybrid course, where a traditional lecture class is paired with ModuMath and testing in a learning center. Students take the ModuMath computer test after attending lecture and working on exercises in the Study Guide. If the student scores low on the test, he or she can review ModuMath's interactive lessons in the learning center, where tutors are available.

Andra adopted this hybrid approach and added a carrot as additional motivation for students. She allows STEPS students to "test ahead". If a student has already passed the ModuMath test for a certain topic, the student is not required to attend the classroom lecture on that topic. A student could actually never attend a

single class after the first orientation day of class if he/she was able to master the lesson concepts through the ModuMath software and study guide and stay ahead of the class presentation schedule.



ANDRA DORLOC HELPS A STUDENT IN THE LEARNING CENTER AT RANKEN TECHNICAL COLLEGE IN ST. LOUIS

Ranken has also been able to eliminate the need for repeat ASSET testing of STEPS students. As Andra explains, "After three years of students completing our program and a successful track record in their subsequent algebra course and technical major, the Dean of Instruction waived the requirement for them to retake the ASSET Numerical Skills placement test."

Most new customers first learn about ModuMath from word of mouth. But Andra's findings are being shared from sea to shining sea. Mt. San Jacinto College in California and Rosemont College in Pennsylvania heard about ModuMath through Andra from a listserv. Both of these colleges are now using ModuMath to help address remedial math needs.

If you'd like to share your experiences using ModuMath with different learner populations, give us a call and we'll help you spread the word. Contact Bob Khouri at 800-821-6313.

ModuMath: For students who struggle with

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New Software Release: Free Upgrade

One of the secrets to ModuMath's success over the years has been our commitment to service after the sale. In response to your requests and suggestions, we're very pleased to announce the release of ModuMath Basic Math Version 1.1c and ModuMath Algebra Version 2.6c. The software is easy to install and takes just a few minutes. The upgrade won't affect any existing student records. And it's available upon request to any current ModuMath user. Just complete the request form on our website and we'll send you the upgrade. The upgrade link is on our home page, www.modumath.org.

ModuMath was designed and created by professional adult educators. However, your input helps us to continually improve and enhance the tutorial, testing and management features. You've told us how to better connect with learners, help instructors be more effective and make institutions more efficient. We've

been able to adopt some of your suggestions in the newest ModuMath release:

- a streamlined Create Class screen making it even easier to enroll your students
- a System Summary that lets you output all student records to one spreadsheet
- corrected typos and increased clarity in some lesson and test questions

Remember, help with installing and using ModuMath is always available on our website, www.modumath.org/help.htm — both as an interactive searchable Help System and as a downloadable print document. The Help System and print document have been updated to reflect the new software release.